

Facets

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JUNE 2006

TAKE THE FAMILY

HIT THE ROAD

*Iowa provides many
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NOTES

Notes from the newsroom

By Heidi Marttila-Losure

When I think back to my childhood, some of the most vivid memories come from our family vacations. Like our trip to the Black Hills during the Sturgis motorcycle rally, when our crew of three adults and five kids had made no hotel reservations. (The first night, everyone had space to sleep somewhere in the topped pickup except my dad, who ended up sleeping on a picnic table, in a child-size sleeping bag that reached just above his waist, with a towel wrapped around his head for warmth.)

This issue is full of advice on making your own family memories without leaving the state. Whether heading north, south, east or west, there should be something between the Missouri and the Mississippi to please everyone in the family. Take a look through this issue, get inspired, and start planning!

But first, we put out a call in The Tribune newsroom for our staff's best childhood vacation memories. Here are some of the vacation moments that left an impression on them. Enjoy!

From reporter Amy Wahle:

Any road trip with my two brothers and I was a dangerous venture.

On our way to LaCrosse, Wis., from Council Bluffs, the endless arguing in the back of the van turned into physical fighting, as usual. This time, my dad decided to stop at a sporting goods store and buy a pair of boxing gloves.

From that point on, we had to wait until he stopped at a rest stop to resolve the conflict. Then we could duke it out. Supposedly, it made the drive quieter.

Most of the conflict came from my older brother, Blu, and me. He was 11, I was 10, and Henry was 8. Dad said that when he brought the gloves on road trips, I not only held my own in the boxing matches, but I often won.

Surprisingly, the memories we have were more fun than painful. But by the time I was 11 and Blu was 12, the boxing had to stop. He was outgrowing me.

Believe it or not, it is a fun memory. Blu went on to set several Iowa high school wrestling records, Henry placed several times and I was the 1997 National Women's Freestyle National Champion. Go figure.

From copy editor Jeni Adkisson:

When I was little we went camping with my grandparents for most of our vacations. (My mom was single with three kids, so we couldn't afford to go to Disney World.) By far the most memorable of these trips was the one we took to Backbone State Park. If you are not familiar, Backbone is a really cool. As I remember it, the main attraction is a trail that goes out on a rock ridge, "the devil's backbone." The ridge has a river that has split around it, and there are cliffs on either side of the trail that are a bazillion feet tall where the river has washed away the land around the rock since ... forever, I guess. (I had a tendency to exaggerate as a child, and I am sure it all looked a lot bigger when I was half as tall as I am now.) There are also trails down around the base of the "cliffs." The coolest part was climbing around in crevices and cracks in the rocks down there. Mom let us climb as high as we dared, which was probably not really that high. And Grandpa and Mom climbed with us. They were always fun like that. I think my Mom even climbed to the upper trail in a place where it wasn't quite a bazillion feet to the top, which I thought was awesome. It was a great time.

WELCOME TO

Facets

Facet > 1. One of the flat surfaces cut on a gemstone.

2. The particular angle from which something is considered.

FACETS IS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE TRIBUNE

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From copy editor Joe Birkestrand:

When I was a child, my parents rented a cabin at Clear Lake for the summer. One day, we decided to rent a Jet Ski. We were told it was all gassed up and ready to go. Half an hour later, the Jet Ski stalled, and my father and I were stranded in the middle of the lake. It was an hour before someone from the Jet Ski rental place came to our rescue, thanks to my mother, who spotted us using a pair of binoculars and alerted them to our predicament. We later learned that the Jet Ski had run out of gas.

From copy editor and cartoonist Carmen Cerra:

Toward the end of a cross-country camping trip from Nebraska to California with a van full of family, my mom announced to all the kids that we were going to Disneyland. She did it just to get rise out of us.

"I'm just kidding!" she said right after the announcement. "We're turning around after we visit Phoenix."

We kids were so angry.

While traveling toward Phoenix, I went to sleep. When I woke up, we were in the parking lot of Disneyland, and the adults had everyone's tickets in hand.

We visited the Grand Canyon, too. It was OK, I guess.

Healthy road food

By Alicia McGhee

Every year, families pack into vehicles to embark on long-distance adventures to beautiful destinations for summer relief. These long car trips too often mean stops at gas stations to provide fuel for the car as well as for the crew inside. With a little preparation, you can keep gas-station dining to a minimum.



First, be sure to pack a cooler with healthy snacks, such as:

- Baby carrots, celery sticks, cucumbers
- Grapes, apples, oranges, bananas, sliced kiwis
- Low-fat yogurt and cups of sugarless Jell-O or pudding
- 100 percent natural fruit juice boxes (no added sugars)
- Plenty of water bottles
- Lean lunch meats and low-fat cheeses (with low-sodium crackers, these make for great light sandwiches)

Have another container available for storing dried treats, such as:

- pretzels, popcorn
- reduced-fat crackers and cookies
- assorted roasted nuts (handful servings suggested)

ings suggested)

- low-calorie granola bars
- low-fat fruit snacks

Every now and again, children will want the popular and less healthy treats that tempt them during gas station pit stops, but you can try to steer them toward these healthier substitutes:

- Baked chips
- Homemade baked fries
- Low-fat muffins, whole wheat bagels with raisins

Don't forget to be prepared by bringing along many napkins, plastic ware, wet naps and plastic bags for garbage.

For more information on proper servings, fun travel snack recipes and regular healthy eating tips, visit www.kaboose.com. Happy travels!



Healthy trail mix

Did you know many prepackaged trail mixes have a lot of sodium and sugar? It's easy to make your own healthier version. Mix up some or all of these ingredients in the proportions that suit you:

- nuts: walnuts, peanuts, cashews, hazelnuts, almonds
- unsalted shelled sunflower seeds
- soy nuts
- low-salt pretzels
- dried fruits such as raisins, blueberries or cranberries (but be careful with how much you add — dried cranberries have added sugar!)
- cereal such as Cheerios
- yogurt-covered raisins

And, as added encouragement for your kids to eat it, drop in a handful of chocolate chips, or M&Ms if you're feeling really decadent. But don't let them pick out the sweets and dump the rest!

Getting beyond 'Are we there yet?'

As much as I don't want it to be, the reality is that there are times my car feels like a living/dining room on wheels. Between running errands, kids' activities and weekend trips, my family and I spend way more time in my vehicle than I would like. On occasion I have been known to say those dreaded words ("Don't make me pull this car over.") But I have also found that with a little effort, riding in the car can be the perfect time for you and your child to talk to one another or play a game together.

Special conversations on the way to school, the grocery store or at the end of a busy day let you and your child talk privately about important thoughts and daily events. These shared conversations help to strengthen the bond between the two of you and enhance your child's language development. Here are some ideas to get you started.

The Day

Help your child anticipate her day: "Today is the day you visit the pumpkin patch with your class. What do you think you might see?"

This is an excellent time to help your child with problem solving. "What can you do if a friend knocks down your block tower today?" Talk about possibilities such as dividing

the blocks so each child can build their own tower or letting the friend know with words that made you unhappy and you are choosing to play somewhere else.

I Spy

"I Spy With My Little Eye" is a favorite game that increases your child's vocabulary and visual aware-

ness of colors, shapes, letters, numbers and types of materials. You might ask, "Can you spy with your little eye something round?" You can either choose to verbally list everything you see that is round or choose a mystery object and encourage your child to guess: "Is it the steering wheel? Is it the radio button?"

What Comes Next?

Together, see if you can describe the route you follow to a specific place. For instance, if you are on the way to the library, you might say, "Let's name the things we will see on the way." Make a verbal list trying to put the sites in order. Check your observations as you drive.

Opposites

Talk about the difference in size and appearance of what you see while you ride. You might ask, "Look out the window. Can you find things

that are high?" Then look for things that are low. You might also talk about things that make you happy to look at (a sunset) or sad (a dog that looks lonely).

Time shared in conversation sends a very important message to your child: you care about him and enjoy his company. Be sure to include your child in your day, too. Tell her about the new friend you've made or share about the coffee spill on your important papers. Most importantly, take time to talk, share and laugh together.

For more fun things to do in the car, be sure to check out these web sites:

- www.momsminivan.com — 101 travel games, printable car activities and road trip tips including how to make a cootie catcher
- www.birdseye.co.uk/kids/activities-for-kids/games-for-the-car/index.asp — a listing of some tried-and-tested car games
- www.activitiesforkids.com/travel/travel_games.htm — a selection of games to play on the road

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By Debra Atkinson

You can find plenty to see in Iowa, and better yet, plenty to do while you are at it. For a real taste of Iowa and its people, you can run, walk, swim or bike your way across the state and experience its history and culture at the same time. There's a summer's worth of events that offer something for everyone in your family. Youth triathlons, kid-friendly walks and more are all a part of the activities across the state.

June

Start with Scandinavian Days in Story City June 2-3, which includes a nature hike on Sunday afternoon, or head to Des Moines on June 3 for 20K, 5K and youth runs at Dam to Dam. My Waterloo Days is also that weekend, continuing through Tuesday. Visit Spencer for a run walk during their Flagfest Celebration June 9-11, and get yourself ready for the June 17 Marathon to Marathon in Storm Lake that Gov. Tom

Vilsack ran last year. Back to the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area for Sturgis Falls Half Marathon and 5K on June 25, together with a weekend of jazz, and you've run right through June.

July

In July you don't have to go far to travel outside of your own zone. For a real peek at the joy of effort in action, you can walk, jog or run yourself to sign up as a volunteer for the Special Olympics July 3 to 7 right here in Ames. If you want to be inspired and awed, don't miss this. If you don't feel your heart beating stronger after witnessing the pure joy of doing, see a doctor.

You can use the inspiration from Special Olympics to get you moving through the remainder of the month! Who doesn't want to be at a lake in July? You can head to Spirit Lake July 8 for the Bike Ride Around Spirit Lake, or go to Okoboji the following weekend, July 15, to take part in the triathlon, the

marathon, the half marathon or the 10K.

For another coupling of music and movement, visit the Bix 7 in Davenport July 27 to 30. Traditionally hot, humid, and full of fun, the festival has become a family tradition for a lot of Iowans. Walk or run, or both, at any age and stage of your life and fitness.

It wouldn't be an article about moving in Iowa without a mention of RAGBRAI. This year, July 23 to 29, it comes so close it may be hard to resist taking a day to be a part of this amazing ride. Like Lance said, it's not the bike. It's the seat. No, it is really about the people. When people tell their stories of their experiences, they talk about the people, the towns, the way they felt alive and as if they really saw the state for the first time. And no gas prices to worry about.

August

Perhaps the biggest link between the road races and

events and Iowa is the food. You can race or stroll your way through Sweet Corn Daze from one side of the state to the other in August. Estherville (first week in August), Cedar Rapids (Aug. 12), and Adel (Aug. 12) host but just a few of the "Run for the Cob" events.

The real travel happens within you wherever your journey may take you. Get out and see the outdoors, but most importantly visit your inside. When you find the activity that makes you lose all track of time, you have found a fitness vacation that is the real ticket to getting away. And it is always a low fare. And it is always the seat by the window. And no one gets in your space. And you'll not mind if it's just a little bit farther. Happy Trails.



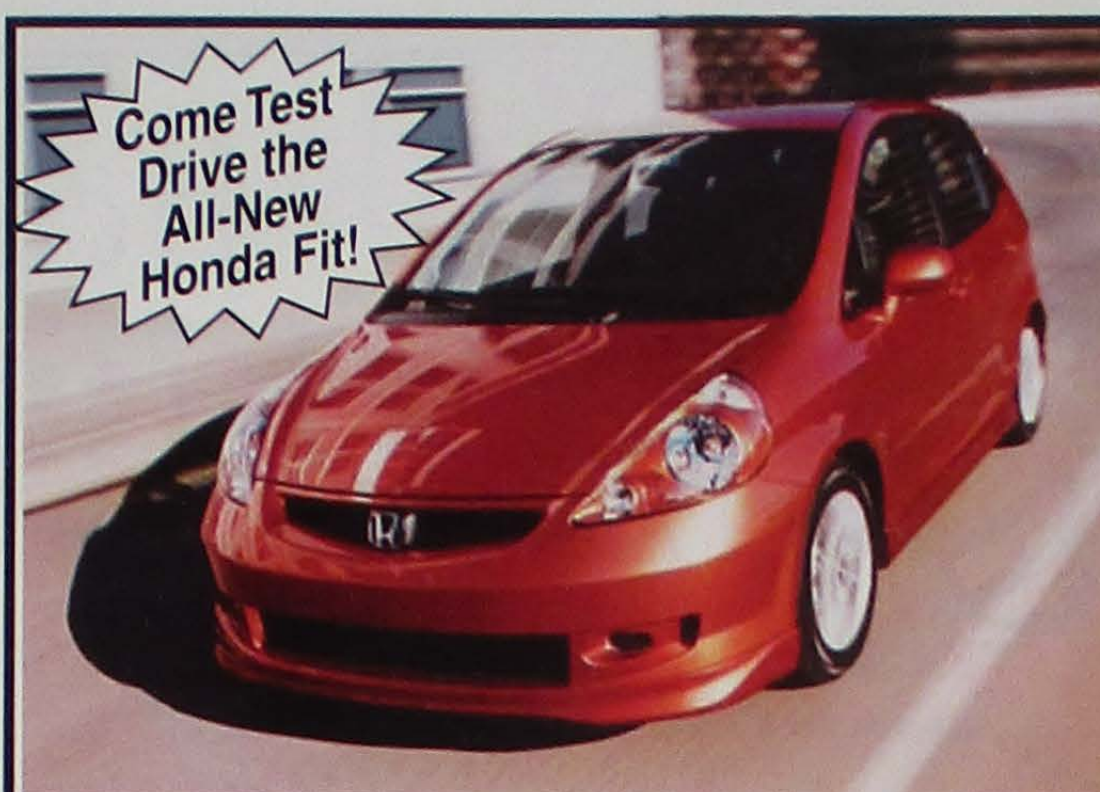
Debra Atkinson is a senior lecturer in the Department of Health and Human Performance at Iowa State University and personal training director at Ames Racquet and Fitness Center.



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Pink houses & bitin' bees

*Family vacations are a time
for laughter and bonding*

Years ago, an associate told my husband that she and her spouse always took trips without their children. "Family vacations never worked out," she said. We felt sorry for her, and even a bit horrified! To us, the word "vacation" is synonymous with "family bonding," bringing back memories of funny and fascinating family times.

Not that I don't enjoy a mini-escape once in a while with my husband, or some time alone at a ladies retreat. It's nice occasionally to be responsible for no one but myself! Yet vacations without our kids are easily forgotten, while family trips created vivid and lasting snapshots and mini-videos in our minds:

- Four-year-old Aimee, in a tropical paradise, is riding in a taxi with us on a winding road, overlooking a small village. She suddenly and mysteriously shrieks "Aaaah!" in terror, and covers her eyes. Alarmed, we ask, "What's wrong?" "I hate pink houses!" she replies, eyes wide.
- The whole Sargent crew plummets down a waterfall ride, screaming in unison as we grip the safety bars. When the ride stops, we run like mad to get in line to do it all over again.
- Preschooler Elisa asks to be buried in the sand, all but her head. Suddenly Gordy, Tyler and Aimee get a wild idea. They sculpt in the sand, below Elisa's tiny grinning face, the body of a six-foot-tall muscle man. I take the picture an instant before she absolutely must scratch her nose and sits up, crumbling her bulging biceps.
- Teenage Tyler points his laser pen in the dark from our campsite, causing the red speck to dance from tree to tree. He raises his voice to make his "bitin' bee" talk in a squeaky voice to three-year-old Elisa, who follows the bee and talks back quite seriously to it. Later, as they hike through lush woods with surprise waterfalls, big brother reaches down and puts little sis on his shoulders to help her make it to the end of the trail.

Frankly, I can hardly write this without yearning to get away with the kids somewhere. We always look forward to that week or two when we escape work

worries and household hassles to focus on each other and the kids. It almost doesn't matter where we go.

It's true that family trips are not always a breeze. It's easy to argue about when to go, or where to go, or how to get there, what to listen to in the car, or when to stop and rest. Everyone in the family has different ideas about what is fun. Yet with creative thinking, we've usually found some common ground.

Anyone making the mistake of assuming that "family vacations will never work out" will most likely regret it when kids grow up and opportunities vanish. Our son is now a 20-year-old college student. We play tug-of-war with his grown-up buddies who want him to vacation with them. Our 15-year-old daughter will too soon be on her own. Quick! We need to make more memories with her and her 9-year-old sister before they are gone, too!

Does travel naturally intrigue you, or are you more of a homebody? If you didn't travel much as a child, leaving the comforts of home may intimidate you a little. You may even worry: What if things go wrong? Well ... on occasion they do. But mishaps make for colorful family lore! And as your family travels together often and learns to work together as a team, fond memories will override less pleasant ones.

Avoid letting "what-ifs" prevent you from venturing out, including worries about keeping kids entertained. Trust in their ability to amuse themselves. You might be amazed at how they can do that without any toys. (See "Foiled.")

Family trips provide countless opportunities for little tickles, big hugs and conversations of all sizes. And after the bags are unpacked, enjoy your travels over and over again: true-adventure stories told round your dinner table from different points of view, forming one cohesive family memory.



This article is excerpted from "The Power of Parent-Child Play" by Laurie Winslow Sargent, instructor of the "Selling Your Nonfiction Workshop" for aspiring authors. The next workshops are July 20 in West Des Moines and July 22 in Carroll. To register, call 1-800-342-0033. Learn more at www.ParentChildPlay.com.

Foiled!

Need five minutes of distraction?

Grab anything that can be twisted to look remotely like a bow: a bread bag twisty, a hair doo-dad, some bowtie macaroni: and hold it under your nose, as if it were a mustache.

In a Snidely-Whiplash type deep voice, sneer: "You must pay the rent!"

Move the bow to the top of your head and in a high, sweet, feminine voice, insist "But I can't pay the rent!"

Repeat this a few times. Then hold the bow under your chin, like a bow-tie, and in a more gallant voice, say, "I'll pay the rent!"

Back to the hairbow. "Oh, my hero!"

Then to the mustache again, "Curses! Foiled again!"

This is one of dozens of 5-Minute Funs from Laurie's book "The Power of Parent-Child Play." Learn more at www.ParentChildPlay.com.



Protecting your skin this summer



By Dr. Kathy Cook

Your skin may not be the first thing you think of when you travel, but it is your first line of defense against the environment.

Common skin problems you might experience with summertime travel in Iowa include sunburns, insect bites and stings, bacterial or fungal infections and allergic contact rashes. A little knowledge may prevent some of these common skin problems or minimize their impact.

Everyone knows that sunburns can be prevented by staying out of the sun, but since that is no fun, follow this advice from our Australian friends: Slip, slop, slap. This stands for slip on a shirt, slop on the sunscreen and slap on a hat. Your skin doesn't forget the sun damage you suffer and shows up years later as wrinkles, freckles and skin cancer. Protect yourself and your family by seeking shade when possible for outdoor activities, wearing protective clothing (long sleeve shirts, pants), wearing a hat that shades the face and neck, wearing wrap around sunglasses and reapplying SPF 30 sunscreen every 2 hours. There are companies that make special lightweight clothes for sun protection and a laundry treatment product that can add sun protection to your clothes. If the cloth is tightly woven and when you hold it up to the light, you can't see through it, it will protect your skin.

Summer outdoor activities can be marred by insect bites or stings. Help prevent them by:

1. Keeping as much skin covered with clothing as possible.
2. Wear light colored clothing, as darker colors attract bugs.
3. Avoid using scented soaps, as fragrances attract insects.
4. Use an insect repellent regularly. The best repellent has been DEET, and it can be safely used on children but look for a product with less than 10% DEET. This will provide 1-3 hours of protection. Don't reapply more frequently than every 2 hours to skin and

avoid hands and around the mouth in young children. Higher concentrations of DEET will last up to 12 hours, but do not use these in children. Avoid using DEET products with a sunscreen because sunscreens may need to be reapplied more often resulting in an over application of DEET. Wash skin when returning indoors to minimize irritation. A new repellent, picaridin, is as effective as DEET and appears to be less irritating. It is available in the U.S. now in Cutter Advanced insect repellent. Natural or plant derived products such as citronella may provide less than one hour of protection against mosquitoes. Limited information is available regarding the health effects and effectiveness of these products.

5. Avoid areas where insects nest.
6. Do daily tick checks of your body and your children's bodies when camping or hiking to prevent tick borne diseases. If you find a tick on yourself or child, do not touch the tick with your bare hand. Use a tweezers to remove the tick and grab it firmly as close to the skin as possible. Pull slowly and steadily without twisting until it lets go. Do not squeeze the tick, use petroleum jelly, solvents, knives or a lit match to kill the tick. Save the tick in a container or plastic bag so it can be tested or identified if necessary.

The two greatest risks from most insect stings are allergic reaction and infection. Treatment for local skin reactions only may include:

1. Remove the stinger by gently scraping across the site with a blunt-edged object, such as a credit card or dull knife. Do not try to pull it out, as this may release more venom.
2. Wash the area well with soap and water and apply antibiotic cream or ointment.
3. Apply a cold or ice pack wrapped in cloth to decrease swelling and pain (10 minutes on and 10 minutes off for 30-60 minutes).
4. Use an over-the-counter anti-itch product (or a paste of baking soda and water for

15-20 minutes or a wet tea bag).

5. Use 1% hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion

6. Give acetaminophen for pain

If you have a known allergy to stings, carry a bee sting kit at all times (such as Epi-Pen, which requires a prescription) and make sure you and your child knows how to use it. Signs that indicate a more serious and possibly life-threatening allergic reaction include coughing, tickling in the throat, tightness in the throat or chest, breathing problems or wheezing, nausea or vomiting, dizziness or fainting, sweating or anxiety. You should call EMS for help.

Fungal infections such as athlete's foot or on the body (commonly known as ringworm) occur during warm damp conditions. Dry the feet well, wear footwear in public areas such as the pool or showers and treat minor cases with over-the-counter antifungal products. Minor bacterial skin infections can be treated with over-the-counter antibiotic cream. If any expanding redness occurs around the area, this may indicate the need for evaluation by your physician.

Poison ivy is the most common cause of allergic contact dermatitis that I see in the office, as it can be extensive and cause significant discomfort. Avoid poison ivy and know what it looks like. The old adage "leaves of three let them be" is your guide to appearance. If you suspect you have gotten into poison ivy, wash the area as soon as possible with warm soapy water to remove plant oils from the skin and wash clothing also. For mild cases, you can follow the recommendations for insect stings. For more severe cases, see your doctor so that prescription medication can be used.

Now that you are armed with some information, enjoy your summer travel in Iowa and don't let the beg bugs bite which is another article!

Dr. Kathy Cook is a dermatologist in Ames. She can be reached at 232-3006.

WEARING A SARI

College student Sarah Beisser traveled to India last fall where she learned from lepers, talked with women living in slums and fell in love with a disorganized but fascinating country.

By Sarah Beisser

As I daydream at my computer, temporarily ignoring the final exam study materials piled on my desk, I think back to the four months I spent studying biology and learning about the culture in South India.

I miss the slow pace of life when four times a day I ceased all productivity to enjoy a tin cup of sweet masala chai. When eating rice in the cafeteria at St. Olaf, sometimes I get a nearly uncontrollable urge to mash it with my right-hand fingers and shovel it with my thumb into my mouth, which is how I ate for four months. I don't feel quite as special strolling across campus in my spring clothes as I did in India, walking down a dirt road in a pink sari with children giggling at me and older men commenting, "Oh, very good, madam. You wear sari very well." They were all so curious, wanting to know what I was doing in India. Sometimes I wondered, too.

At the Schieffelin Leprosy Research and Training Center near Vellore, I met a delightful woman named Valsa, the hospital's clinical psychologist. For one of my research projects, she translated for me as I asked patients about how leprosy has affected their quality of married life. Patients' answers were simple yet significant. "He doesn't buy me flowers anymore" really meant "He doesn't love me," and "He won't eat with me" meant "He doesn't appreciate me."

On the weekends, Valsa would invite me to



dinner and let me attempt to cook Indian with her. She would then feed the rest of the family and me as though we were starving. The moment my basmati rice or spicy vegetable sambar was halfway depleted, she would encourage, "Sarah, oh, there's plenty. Please eat more. Eat more," and then scoop heaping servings onto my plate.

The women in India love to serve. During a visit to a rural village, I learned that some women prepare meals for their husbands and children (often five or six), only eating after everyone was full.

Women also serve each other. In non-governmental women self-help groups, women share in leadership responsibilities to start weaving, clothing, sewing, and craft-making businesses. Banks give loans to women, who pay the loans back, but hesitate to lend to men. The women I met were excited about their success and ability to serve their families.

I never ceased to be amazed at how people functioned so fluidly amid such disorganization. Everything from medical care to public transportation seemed either unreliable or inefficient. Whenever using buses in India, I never knew how long I'd wait to board, how long I would ride, or where to disembark. Initially, this frustrated me, but when I waited four hours for a bus in the Nilgiri Hills toward the end of my stay in India, I knew I was becoming accustomed to the way of life and perhaps, a bit more patient.

I felt cared for in India. When traveling to a rural hospital on a crowded, smelly, hot bus that was tossing my body and backpack (which served as my dresser and closet for entire trip) around the aisle, I had no idea where I was going. I had said the name of the hospital when boarding, and the conductor had nodded, taking my five rupees (12 cents). However, after 10 minutes, I was beginning to get frantic. Had I missed the stop? Suddenly, the bus lurched to a stop and the entire bus of over 100 people yelled out, "Here madam!"

Yes hospital stop! Here is CMC!" How had they known where I needed to go? But there I was, stepping off of the crowded bus, waving in disbelief, as smiling faces whirled by. "I'll have to tell my dad about this," I thought, remembering how worried he had been about my safety before I left.

Many Americans have heard about the poverty in India, a concern that is growing as India closes in on China as the most populated country in the world. Of course, poverty is more of a reality in certain castes, but the government is designing a sort of "equal opportunity" for people in lower castes. I visited the women of a slum in the large city of Chennai and was surprised by a friendly greeting of sandalwood face powder and a fresh jasmine necklace. However, the reality of the women's situation emerged as we conversed. Many were being abused by alcoholic husbands, could not feed their children, and felt hopeless. They asked if life was like that in America. I said yes, but for not nearly as many people. Their hope comes from the women's self-help groups that employ women of the slums, giving them the ability to not only care for their families, but also buy new saris and gold earrings (a sign of status for Indian women).

India and the people of India have changed my life. Not a day goes by that I don't think about the time spent in that foreign yet welcoming country. Everything that felt uncomfortable to me upon arrival — the smells of spicy food, sound of dissonant music, sites of looming Hindu temples, and white eyes staring out of dark faces — I already missed during departure. Though I often had no agenda, plan, direction or certainty, I felt more alive and purposeful than I ever have in my life. India helped me realize that God is a consummate artist who made his people remarkably different yet profoundly capable of communicating with, sharing with, and influencing each other.

Sarah Beisser of Ames is a student at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. She can be reached at beisser@stolaf.edu.



Sarah Beisser, center, smiles with Valsa, right, and another clinical psychologist at the leprosy center

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TAKE THE FAMILY HIT THE ROAD

Iowa provides many destinations for fun family getaways

WHAT ARE YOUR SUMMER PLANS?

If you are like many Iowans, your vacation days — the ones you've taken off from work, the ones you've made reservations for — probably take you beyond Iowa's borders. But what about your summer weekends?

The pages that follow (and, let's not kid ourselves, high gas prices as well) may encourage you to consider a few mini getaways in our fine home state. The Facets crew has put together a listing of intriguing family-friendly destinations that are doable in a weekend. No matter which direction you set out in, you should be able to find fun long before you reach the Iowa border.

For more information

Much of the information that follows is taken from the Iowa 2006 Travel Guide. For your own copy, as well as much more information about touring the state, go to www.traveliowa.com.

SET YOUR COURSE



NORTH

For fun in the sun and countless ways to splash around in water, keep the Iowa Great Lakes Region on your radar. Iowa's largest natural lake, Spirit Lake, connects to a chain of five other glacier-carved lakes for 15,000 acres of water. Or veer a little east for the towering bluffs and beautiful scenery of charming Decorah. The thriving downtown is filled with quaint, hometown shops and the historic venues that teach and entertain.



A FUN PLACE TO EAT

O'Farrell Sisters Restaurant, located on Smith's Bay, is a longtime favorite of regular vacationers and serves a popular breakfast. Don't forget to try the pancakes.

Historic Arnolds Park & Maritime Museum

Highway 71 and Lake Street, Arnolds Park
Regular admission for anyone over 48 inches tall is \$9. Children between 36 and 48 inches are \$7. Children less than 36 inches are free, and seniors are \$8. The park is open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. most days.
www.arnoldspark.com

Here's where you can get the funnel cakes. Historic Arnolds Park is an amusement park and much more. Relax on the beach and gear up for adventure and go scuba diving. Shop, eat and stay around for live music at this bustling stop.

Okoboji Summer Theatre

2001 Highway 71 North, Okoboji
Tickets are \$14 for non-musicals, \$16 for musicals and \$4.50 for Boji Bantam children's productions. For a complete list of plays, dates and times call 712-332-7773.

Nine shows run through the season, including Broadway hits such as "The Music Man," which plays in August, and children's productions throughout the summer. Call in advance, as these shows do sell out.

The Queen II Excursion Boat

Board the ship near Historic Arnolds Park, Hwy 71 and Lake Street in Arnolds Park. Rides go out at 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and sometimes at 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$10 for anyone over 36 inches tall, free for those under 36 inches and \$9 for seniors. Group rates are available.

This incarnation of the double-decker passenger ships that have navigated the Iowa Great Lakes for decades celebrates 20 years on the water.



Photo courtesy of David Thoreson, Blue Water Studios, Arnolds Park, Iowa and Okoboji Tourism.

Porter House Museum

401 West Broadway St., Decorah
Admission for adults is \$4 and \$3 for students and seniors. Children younger than 6 years old are free. The museum is open daily 1 to 4 p.m. from June 1 to Aug. 31 and on the weekends in May and September. Go to www.porterhousemuseum.com for special events, recitals and concerts.

The Porter House Museum reflects the lifestyle and interests of its former owners, who were naturalists and artists. Collections of rare and exotic butterflies, moths, insects, birds and bird eggs, Indian relics, rocks, minerals and shells are housed in the museum. Unique art created from moths and butterflies adds to the exotic ambiance.

Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum

3603 236th Ave., Decorah
Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for senior and \$3 for children. Children younger than 5 years old are free. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.
www.lauraingallswilder.us

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Park & Museum is the only remaining childhood home of the famous "Little House" author. The trip may inspire your little ones to read these classics if they haven't already. Sign up for a tour of the 11-room hotel that's furnished with period furnishings and authentic items Wilder used in her lifetime.

Hruska's Canoe & Kayak Livery & Bluffton Campground

3233 347th St., Kendallville
For more information and prices of rentals, call 563-547-4566 or the campgrounds at 563-735-5633.

Explore Decorah, where the water winds around the bluffs. The whole family can travel down the Upper Iowa River together on a canoe, kayak or tube.

Paint Creek Riding Stables & Campground

Located 7 miles southeast of Waukon off Highway 76 South or 20 minutes from Decorah.

Call 563-568-7253 for an appointment.

The stables provide a supervised one-hour horseback trail ride. Stop for a picnic; play at the playground or in the pond along the way. Hiking trails, pedal boats, horse-shoes and sand volleyball courts are just a few of the other activities this area offers.

A QUIRKY DETOUR:

If in the mood for a detour off Highway 169, make time for a peaceful stop at The Grotto of Redemption in West Bend to feel as though you are walking through a European cathedral. The cave-like cathedral of minerals is the largest of its kind in the world. A composite of nine separate grottos, each portrays some scene in the life of Christ.

SET YOUR COURSE



EAST

Imaginations can run wild in the cornstalks and magic of the riverboat atmosphere in eastern Iowa. Explore the vineyards, famous art pieces and botanical attractions of this glowing Midwestern area. Point your compass a little bit south toward Burlington to find a different kind of adventure, from throwing dice at the Catfish Bend Riverboat to testing navigational skills along the "Crookedest Street in the World."



Grant Wood Art Festival near Bellevue
Photo courtesy of the Iowa Tourism Office

Grant Wood Scenic Byway

Enter at the West End along Highway 64; East End along Highway 52, near Bellevue. Taking you through the environment that inspired one of Iowa's most famous artists, Grant Wood, this tour of the countryside lets you experience the beauty of Iowa firsthand. Signs will guide travelers through by caves, haystacks, hills and cornstalks.

Bellevue Butterfly Garden

Bellevue State Park, Highway 52
(563) 872-4019

Open 4 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.
www.exploreiowaparks.com

Discover the butterfly at this beautiful garden in Bellevue, which hosts 60 different species of the majestic creatures.

Fenelon Place Elevator

512 Fenelon Place, Burlington

(563) 582-6496

Hours of operation: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily

www.dbq.com/fenplco

Ride the scenic path in the world's steepest, shortest railway also known as the Fourth Street Elevator. The 296-foot lift, which was launched in 1882, carries riders 189 feet from Fourth Street to Fenelon Place, while offering a beautiful view of three states and the Mississippi River along the way.

Crystal Lake Cave

Three miles south of Dubuque on Highway 52
(563) 556-6451

Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, Memorial Day to Labor Day.

www.crystallakecave.com

This 3,000-foot cave allows tourists to explore hidden Iowa treasures. Visitors can arrange a guided tour, browse the gift shop and take delight in the picnic grounds nearby.

Family Museum

2900 Learning Campus Drive, Bettendorf
(563) 344-4106

Summer hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

www.familymuseum.org

Ever touch a tornado? Well, here's your chance. At the Family Museum, kids and adults are engaged in the scientific wonders of nature's elements like clouds, storms, human anatomy, music and much more.



Family Museum in Bettendorf

Photo courtesy of the Iowa Tourism Office

A QUIRKY DETOUR:

The Ghost Town of Edinburgh and accompanying museum is a fun detour to take. The site features 12 buildings of a town which was originally populated from 1840 to 1847. Check out the vacated markings of early life in Iowa and discover why it has become a "ghost town."

Michael's Fun World

345 W. 76th Street, Davenport

563-386-3826

www.michaelsfunworld.com

Race around the go-kart tracks, putt on a miniature golf course or swing your best at this fun family attraction. Visitors can also enjoy rock climbing, air hockey, laser tag and arcade games.

Putnam Museum of History and Natural Science/IMAX Theatre

101 W. River Drive, Davenport

563-328-1933/800-435-3701

www.putnam.org

Explore history of life along the Mississippi River through changing exhibits, 3-D IMAX shows and a museum store.

Arts For Living Center

Near Highway 534, Seventh and Washington streets, Burlington

The center is open from noon to 5 p.m.

Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday throughout the year.

(319) 754-8069

www.artguildofburlington.org

Explore the historic church of Burlington, which houses the artworks of southeastern Iowa artists. The building dates back to 1868 and is a staple in the Heritage Hill Historic District.

Snake Alley

Between Washington and Columbia streets on Sixth Street, Burlington

(319) 752-6365 or 1-800-82-RIVER

www.visitburlington.com

Known as the "Crookedest Street in the World" according to Ripley's Believe it or Not, Snake Alley is a challenge for anyone interested in driving, biking or walking down this road. The 275-foot landmark drops 58 feet across its stretch, including five half-curves and two quarter-curves.

Starr's Cave Nature Center/Park and Preserve

11627 Starr's Cave Road

319-753-5808

The park and preserve are open every day from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Nature center hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays (year-round) and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

www.dmcconservation.com

Stop for a picnic or enjoy outdoor games with the family at this scenic 200-acre community of forests.



A FUN PLACE TO EAT

Visit Ivy's Bake Shoppe and Café, located in Fort Madison, for an exquisite taste of South Iowa cuisine. This restaurant boasts some of the best pastries and a tasty lunch menu for passersby. Hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Midwest Old Threshers Heritage Museums

405 E. Threshers Road

319-385-8937

Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekends.

Take the kids on an adventure through time, with antique tractors and traction steam engines from Iowa's early agricultural days. Learn about the beginnings of American farm techniques with explanatory displays on farm tools, water, electricity and women's historic contributions to farm life. Visitors can also explore old American theatre memorabilia, from scripts and stage props to photos and costumes, at the Theatre Museum of Repertoire Americana.

SET YOUR COURSE



SOUTH

Des Moines is probably already on your summer vacation calendar. Who in Iowa doesn't make it to the Iowa State Fair in August? And if your children are old enough to enjoy it, you know all about Adventureland as well. Beyond these well-known destinations, pointing the family car south can yield a scrapbook of memories. And don't tell your kids, but a lot of this fun is educational, too!



WHERE TO EAT

Hungry for a little taste of the Netherlands? Stop at one of the bakeries in Pella (I can recommend the Jaarsma Bakery, 727 Franklin St.) for a Dutch letter. (Or two — these almond-paste-filled pastries go down easy.) And while you're in town, there's still a lot to see in this Dutch town in the heart of Iowa even though the festival for bobbing tulip blooms has passed. The Pella Historical Village (714 E. First St.; admission is \$8 for adults, \$2 for children kindergarten through 12th grade) features Dutch artifacts and architecture, including a canal, with the Vermeer Windmill as the main attraction.

National Balloon Museum

1601 N. Jefferson Way (Highway 65/69 North), Indianola

Museum has free admission, though donations are welcome; museum hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. National Balloon Classic admission is \$3 per person or \$8 per carload Friday through Sunday, a dollar cheaper on weekdays or free all days for children 12 and younger.

www.nationalballoonmuseum.com

Start humming that "Up, Up and Away" song as you walk in the doors of the National Balloon Museum, which covers 200 years of ballooning history in its displays. While very young visitors might get a little antsy at the exhibits inside,

timing your visit to Indianola to coincide with the National Balloon Classic, from July 28 to Aug. 5 this year, is sure to elicit awe from all ages. Balloons manned by pilots from all over the country competing for \$20,000 in prize money go up at 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. during the event.

Belinda Toy and Antique Museum

12 miles south of Knoxville on Highway 14.

Admission is \$4 per person and by appointment only; call (641) 862-4439.

Remember when toys didn't require batteries? A visit to this antique toy museum, housed in a converted church, will be an exercise in nostalgia for grandparents and a glimpse at a different way to play for kids. George and Linda Pierschbacher created the museum in 1986 to show their extensive collection of toy trains, airplanes, dolls, and tin and cast-iron toys.



Living History Farms in Urbandale

Photo courtesy of the Iowa Tourism Office

Living History Farms

2600 11th St., Urbandale; take the Hickman Road exit off Interstate 35/Interstate 80.

Admission is \$12 for adults, \$6 for children ages 4 to 12 and \$10 for senior citizens. The farms are open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

www.lhf.org

It's one thing to read about history or to watch it on TV. It's quite another to get your own pair of work gloves and dive right into the action. That's what happens at Living History Farms, where visitors are invited to take part in the historical re-enactments, such as saddling horses, making ice cream and churning butter or digging a grave for a Victorian funeral. Different farms feature different eras, from a 1700 Ioway Indian farm to a horse-powered farm in the 1900s.

A QUIRKY DETOUR:

Stop in Eldon to pose in front of the American Gothic house, the home that, with its Gothic window, inspired Iowa artist Grant Wood to create the famous "American Gothic" painting. You can't go in, but then, neither did Wood. Wood asked his dentist and his sister Nan to pose as a farmer and his unmarried daughter for the painting, which has become the subject of endless parodies.

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge

Prairie City; take the Colfax exit from Interstate 80 south on Highway 117 to Prairie City; the entrance is near the Highway 63 interchange.

Free admission; tour the refuge from dawn to dusk, or visit the interpretive center from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday or noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

www.tallgrass.org

The secret to Iowa's bumper crops of corn and soybeans lies in its fertile soil, and that fertility is the gift of the prairie that Iowa used to be. There's very little of that prairie left, and most of it is in postage-stamp pieces scattered around the state. At the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, which at 5,000 acres is the largest reconstruction of tallgrass prairie in the United States, visitors can get some sense of the prairie's vastness, as well as see where the buffalo still roam.



Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines

Photo courtesy of the Iowa Tourism Office

Blank Park Zoo

7401 SW Ninth St., Des Moines. From Interstate 35, take Interstate 80 east to exit 141 toward Altoona; stay on this bypass until SW Ninth Street, then turn north.

Admission is \$7.95 for adults, \$4.95 for children ages 3 to 14 and \$5.95 for senior citizens; the zoo is open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

www.blankparkzoo.com

This zoo doesn't compare to the zoos of many bigger cities, and thank goodness for that. Adults will enjoy more elbow room, and children will enjoy being able to get a closer look at the critters. Animals

range from typical zoo dwellers to some more exotic creatures such as the hissing cockroach and the Wieders marmoset.

Science Center

401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, Des Moines

Prices range from \$6 for children to \$13 for adults, depending on what you want to take in. Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Wednesday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

www.sciowa.org

Tell your children to put on their lab coats, as a visit to the Science Center will turn them into little scientists. Visitors both young and old are invited to explore their interests in topics ranging from the inside of the human body to the outer reaches of the solar system. There's also a special exhibit this summer on the history and science of the Titanic.

Adventureland

5091 NE 56th St., Altoona; From Interstate 35, take Interstate 80 east to the Highway 65 exit and watch for the signs.

Regular admission is \$29; children ages 4 to 9 and senior citizens are charged \$25. Parking is \$4. The park opens at 10 a.m. every day during the season; closing hours vary, but are usually 9 p.m. on weekday nights and 10 p.m. on weekends.

www.adventurelandpark.com

OK, your children wouldn't forgive us if we didn't at least put this on the possibilities list. The more than 100 rides are the park's main attraction and include two new options this year: a thrill ride called The Splash Over, which propels riders through "a sky-high curtain of water that randomly provides everything from a light mist to a good old-fashioned soaking," according to the park's Web site, and the family-suited The Frog Hopper, which quickly bumps young riders 20 feet in the air, then sets them down gently.

SET YOUR COURSE



WEST

When the Facets crew started thinking about what there is to see in western Iowa, the first thing that came up was the Omaha Zoo. But wait — that's in Nebraska. It turns out there are enough kid-friendly destinations on this side of the Missouri for at least a good month's worth of weekend trips. So go west, young man. And woman. What the heck, bring the whole family!

Milwaukee Railroad Shops Historic District

3400 Sioux River Road, Sioux City
Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. An admission fee is charged; call (712) 276-6432 for more information.
www.rypn.org/shra

For the Thomas the Tank Engine fans in your family, a stop at the Milwaukee Railroad Shops Historic District could prove interesting. This collection of steam-era railroad buildings includes a roundhouse with turntable.

Sioux City Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center

900 Larsen Park Road, Sioux City
Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free.
www.siouxcitylcic.com

Sign up your children to soldier with Lewis and Clark for a day at this interactive center, which focuses on the experience of the explorers as they traveled through the Sioux City area.

Squirrel Cage Jail

228 Pearl St., Council Bluffs
Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6 to 12.
www.thehistoricalsociety.org

When your children start getting squirrely, tell them you know just the place for them. The Squirrel Cage Jail is a unique building: It has three floors of revolving cells inside a cage, a system that was supposed to have maximum security with minimum work for the jailer.

Loess Hills Scenic Byway/Visitors Center

119 Oak St., Moorhead
Hours for the visitors center are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday. Free admission.
www.loesshillstours.com

Feel the breeze as you stand atop a hill in western Iowa, and you can understand where the rippling hills below you came from. "Loess" means windblown soil, and the Loess Hills in Iowa are one of just two such formations in the world. Stop at the visitors center in Moorhead to learn about the area

before setting out to traipse to the top of a hill or two, or perhaps just stop to take in the view at "The Spot," a massive observation deck off Highway 183 between Pisgah and Moorhead.

Antique City Welcome Center

697 Highland St., Walnut
Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Free admission.
www.walnutiowa.com

The best way to look at antiques is to bring along someone who remembers how to use them; then a stroll through an antique store becomes a stroll down memory lane. If that idea appeals to you, bring along the grandparents as well as the children for your trip to Walnut, which has antique and gift shops in 1900s storefronts lining the cobblestone streets.

The Old Factory

110 Fourth St. SW, Orange City
Hours are 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.
www.theoldfactory.com

Ever tried on a pair of wooden

shoes? Make a stop at The Old Factory in Orange City, which once did swift business in making wooden shoes in this Dutch community. The factory is now a shop where wooden shoes are for sale in 20 sizes.



A FUN PLACE TO EAT

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ... well, you know what children want on a hot summer day. LeMars calls itself "The Ice Cream Capital of the World" because more ice cream is made there by a single company (Wells' Dairy, maker of Blue Bunny) than in any other city — more than 120 million gallons. Take a stroll through the museum to learn about the history of ice cream, then end your visit at the 1920s-style ice cream parlor for a good licking — of chocolate or vanilla or strawberry, that is.



Loess Hills near Moorhead

Photo courtesy of the Iowa Tourism Office

The Kaleidoscope Factory

104 S. Main St., Pomeroy
Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. the second Saturday each month, by chance or by appointment.
www.kaleidoscopefactory.com

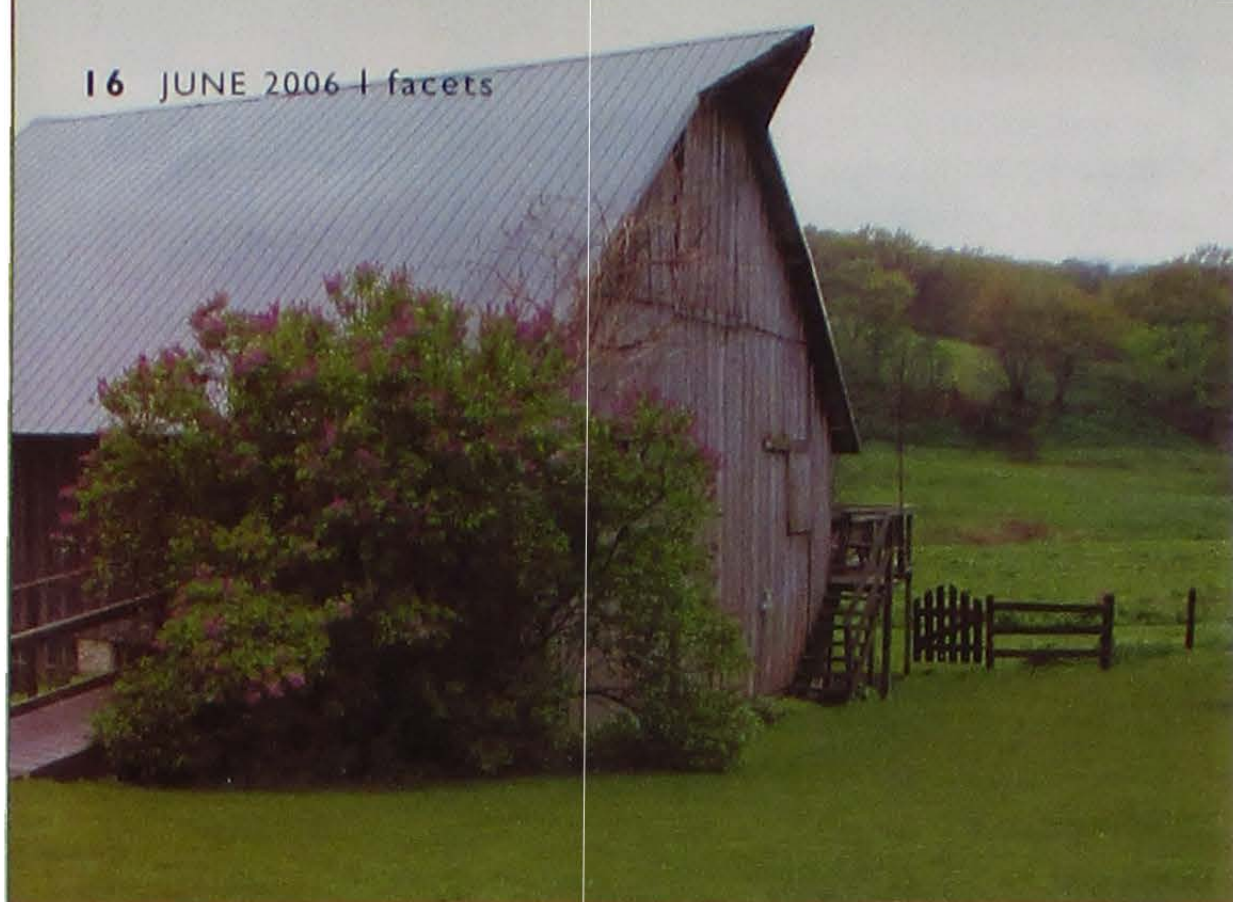
Who didn't love figuring out how a kaleidoscope worked as a child? See a master artist make a kaleidoscope at this shop in Pomeroy, then purchase one to take home if you want.

Garst Farm Resort

1390 Highway 141 (1/2 mile east of Coon Rapids)
Call (712) 684-2964 or go to www.farmresort.com for hours and tour schedule. Many Iowans spent their summers having fun in the countryside; somehow their city or suburb children are missing the joy of that experience. If that describes you, bring your family to Garst Farm Resort to have some old-fashioned fun: canoeing, fishing, ATV rental, hiking and star watching are some of the formally offered activities at the Garst Farm Resort.

A QUIRKY DETOUR:

Every town needs a claim to fame, and Sac City's is in the form of popcorn. On the town's second try at making the Guinness Book of World Records, the good people of Sac City created the world's largest popcorn ball in 2004. The ball weighs 3,100 pounds and is 23 feet in circumference. The town first tried at the record in 1995, but their 2,225-pound popcorn ball was soon surpassed by the 2,377-pound ball made a group of Boy Scouts. The first popcorn ball was blown up in celebration in 1997. Watch for signs for the ball on Highway 20.



This barn at Garst Farm Resort makes a fine venue for dances.

A LEGACY

for the land

By Heidi Marttila-Losure

In order to protect the land they loved, the Garst family gave it away.

When the family gathered after Stephen Garst's funeral, they knew the land they had inherited from him was special because of its size and history. The property was large: A 5,000-acre tract of conservation and recreation land was rare in a state known for its small farms. And the land had been owned by Stephen Garst's father, Roswell, who made a name for himself with his showy salesmanship of hybrid seed corn and later by hosting Soviet Premier Nikita

Khrushchev at his farm during the Cold War.

But they also knew that with many people inheriting the land, it was possible the land could at some point in the future be sold off piece by piece.

So in 2005, to ensure the land's protection, the Garsts created a nonprofit organization that has a three-fold mission: conserving natural areas, practicing and researching sustainable land management techniques and providing public recreation and education — all on the same land.

Part of that vision, even

before the Whiterock Conservancy had been created, was Garst Farm Resort, which has been run by Liz Garst for the past 10 years. Liz, the oldest of Stephen's six children, grew up with her siblings picnicking and hunting on the land. When she came back to Iowa after a number of years living elsewhere, she brought with her an idea for making the land profitable: ecotourism.

"All around the world there's a trend toward ecotourism," she said. "It gives local people an opportunity to make money in the local economy. I always thought that was a good idea right here."

If some of her neighbors might have thought there was little chance for success in tourism in rural Coon Rapids, Liz knew it could work.

"We never had trouble finding things to do here," she said. "What we did was take what was here and really marketed it."

Other family members provided more financial backing, and Garst Farm Resort was born. The resort business will soon become part of the Whiterock Conservancy, becoming a natural part of the conservancy's mission for public recreation and education.

While a variety of interesting accommodations are available (like the Hollyhock Cottage, which was first a chicken coop,

then a hired hand's lodgings, then a garden shed and features the décor from each), day visitors or campers are also welcome to the Whiterock Conservancy.

Some of the possible activities for families with children include fishing, hiking, canoeing, birdwatching, alternative agriculture tours, mountain biking and ATV riding. But Liz says activities with less direction might make a better experience for children.

"More and more we're trying to have kids have experiential, unstructured learning opportunities," she said. "Not planned activities — just let them play in the river. It's good to just get kids outdoors and let them explore. We have some nice places to do that."



Liz Garst, who was 8 years old when the Khrushchevs visited, tells funny and true stories from the day for guests at Garst Farm Resort.

What was the Khrushchev visit?

Agricultural innovator and citizen diplomat Roswell Garst and his wife, Elizabeth, culminated distinguished careers by hosting Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at their Coon Rapids, Iowa, farm during the height of the Cold War, in September 1959. This historic event opened the doors to the "trade butter, not guns" diplomacy between the Soviet Union and the United States that eventually resulted in the open trade policies of today.

— from www.farmresort.com



Liz Garst says she had a dreadful fight with her mother the morning the Khrushchevs visited over whether she would have to wear a frilly dress. Her mother won the fight; Liz is pictured at right in the front row.

Afternoon ESCAPES

On those days when the children have you pulling your hair out by mid-morning, here are some activities that are easy to accomplish in an afternoon, within an easy drive from Ames:

A tour on the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad

225 10th St., Boone

Excursions: 1:30 Saturdays in May; 1:30 daily and 1:30 and 4 on weekends from Memorial Day weekend to Oct. 31

Basic fares: \$14 for adults, \$5 for children 3-12

The train takes a tour through the Des Moines River valley over two impressive bridges. Pack a lunch and come early to take a trolley ride (free for children 13 and younger, \$2 for others).



A spin on the Story City Carousel

North Park, Story City

From Memorial Day to Labor Day: noon to 6 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday; noon to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. May and September: noon to 8 p.m. weekends.

Fares per ride: \$1 at the carousel; tickets can be purchased at the Story County Chamber office (618 Broad St.) for 75 cents.

Rides on Fridays are 50 cents.

This restored 1913 Herschell-Spillman antique carousel features hand-carved wooden animals revolving to the tunes from a 1936 Wurlitzer band organ. There's a park where the children can run off some energy, too.

A walk through the Kate Shelley Railroad Museum and Park

1198 232nd St., Moingona
1 to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday from June to September

Free

The dramatic story of how 15-year-old Kate Shelley risked her life to stop a train headed for a washed out bridge is told in a restored depot. Bring the children when they need a little incentive to think of others before themselves.

A canoe float down the Des Moines River at Seven Oaks Recreation

1086 222nd Drive
(off Highway 30)

Departure times: 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m. through October

Prices start at \$40 per canoe.

A two- to four-hour float down the Des Moines River, with stops for a bit of play along the sandbars, is good fun for you and the children. Required reservations can be made at www.sevenoaksrec.com.

A stroll through children's garden the Iowa Arboretum

1875 Peach Ave., Madrid
Gardens are open sunrise to sunset, year-round.

Free

A lovely walk through 18 plant collections — including herbs, nut trees and a butterfly garden — may or may not impress the children, but there's a children's garden where children are invited to get their hands dirty. The theme for the children's garden this year is "Totally Tomatoes." Check online for events for kids: www.iowaarboretum.org/news/.



A TRIP TO Beaconsfield

Retracing a connection to the original Hy-Vee store

By Nancy Lewis

On a beautiful late September day in 2002, my son Jon and I set out for Beaconsfield, Iowa. We were looking for a piece of family history. For a year, from fall 1933 to summer 1934, my parents and I had lived in Beaconsfield. My father was now dead, and my mother was 96 years old. I wanted to see the place where I spent the first year of my life, while my mother was still alive and I could talk to her about that year.

My father had been a school superintendent in 1933, but his salary had been cut. There was a lot of financial hardship everywhere then. So he decided to try running a general store in Beaconsfield. This venture was not a success. I doubt that my dad would have done well in business even in good times; he was too soft-hearted. But that year in southern Iowa was awful. There was no rain, and the chinch bugs ate the corn. Dad let people buy what they needed on credit, and when they couldn't pay their bills, neither could he. He went broke within a year and was lucky enough to be asked to be the superintendent of schools in Urbana, Iowa, for the fall of 1934. We left Beaconsfield, and none of us had ever been back.

Dad owned the general store business, but he didn't own the building. It appears that the building was owned from 1924 to 1936 by an A.W. Dufty. From 1930 to 1933, the general store in the building was operated by Charles L. Hyde and David M. Vredenberg. From that small beginning, those two gentlemen went on to build a giant company, Hy-Vee Inc., which is now Iowa's largest private employer. And the Beaconsfield building is recognized as the first Hy-Vee store.

Beaconsfield is in Ringgold County, about 20 miles north of the Missouri border. In the 1930s about 150 people lived there. Besides the general store, the town had several other businesses and a school.

On that September day as Jon and I drove into Beaconsfield, the first thing we saw was the store building, with the marker on the wall next to the road proclaiming this to be the original Hy-Vee store. So here we were, 68 years after I had left. It felt odd to think that I had learned to walk and talk here, had been baptized in the Methodist Church, had played on the floor of that building. I had spent my first Christmas and my first birthday here.

Beaconsfield is peaceful and pleasant, with a park-like beauty. Unlike many small towns in Iowa, in this community the remaining residents have taken down any abandoned buildings and planted grass on the sites. The area where the house we lived in had been is now filled with tall trees. Near where the school used to be is a shelter house, as well as some swings, a slide, and an old-fashioned merry-go-round.

They have put the old school bell on a pedestal. A marker on the pedestal tells that the site for Beaconsfield was purchased in June 1881. The town had a railroad depot; the first cars went by in September 1882, and the last in December 1945. The Methodist Church is still on the same site, though the building I was baptized in burned some years later and has been rebuilt.

Jon and I had a fine time wandering around, taking pictures and enjoying the quiet space. Then a car came past, and the people in it asked if they could do anything for us. We told them why we were there. They got in touch with Eugene and Esther McAlexander, who had the keys to the old grocery building, which is now the community building. Esther and Eugene opened the building so we could go inside.

The community building has information about the history of the town and its residents. I remember a display about Peggy Whitson, the astronaut, who is probably the best-known person to grow up in Beaconsfield. On one wall is a clock that had been donated to the school by the class of 1931.

Interesting as all this was, the most exciting thing for me was just being in the building, thinking about my dad cutting meat or selling clothespins while my mother was trying to keep year-old me out of mischief amid the clutter and temptations of a general store. Thinking that my parents were so young, and wishing that I could remember. What a hard year that was for everyone who lived there, and yet my parents made friends, went to church and to school activities, and were needed in the community.

We took more pictures; then we thanked Eugene and Ester and said goodbye. It was nice to realize as we drove away that once this place had been my home.

Nancy Lewis would like to thank Marilyn Gahm, the Hy-Vee History Center coordinator, and Lois Davis, Dorine Jones, and Esther and Eugene McAlexander of Beaconsfield with the help they provided for this article.



Nancy Lewis lives in Ames and can be reached at 233-2874.

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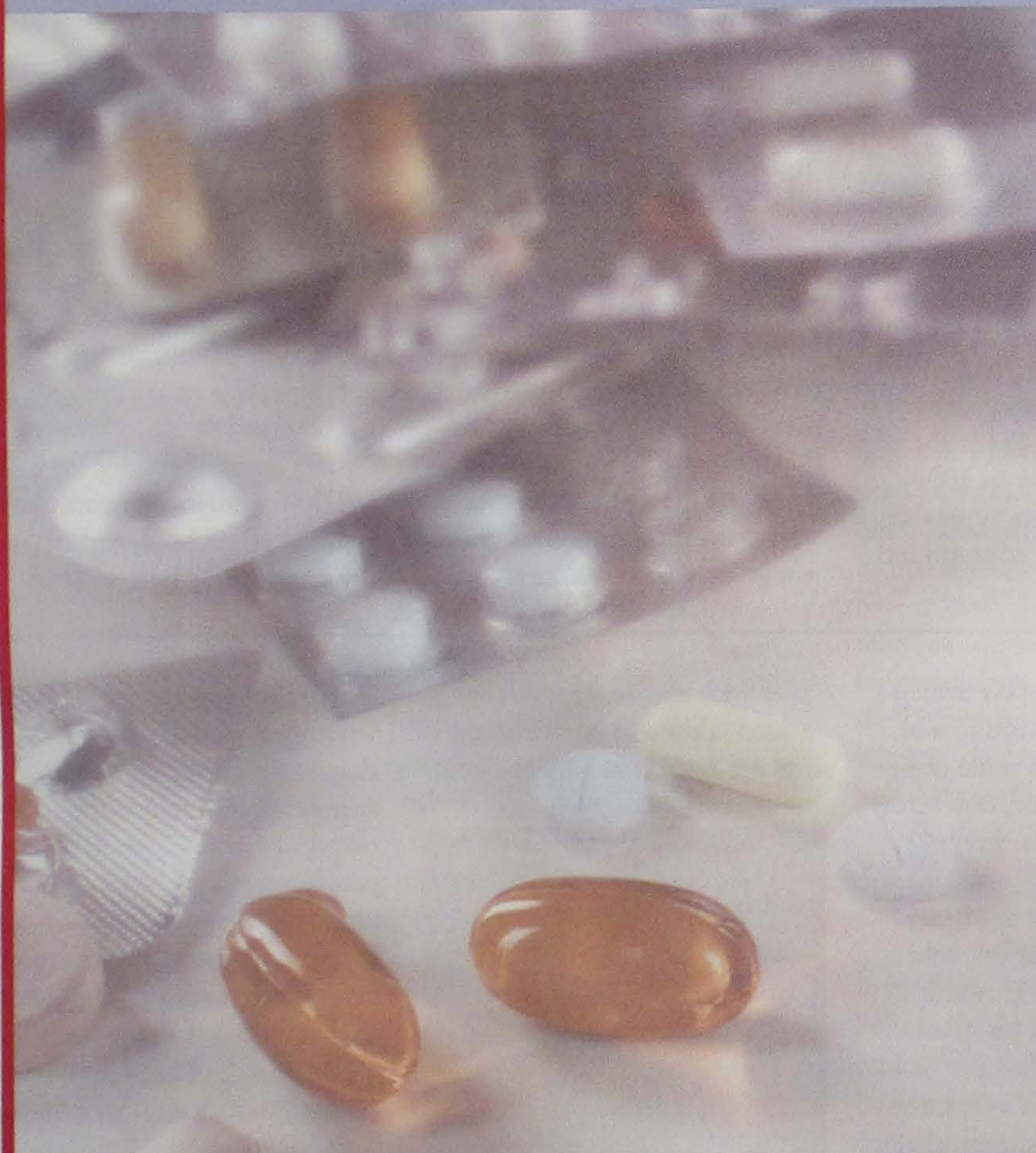
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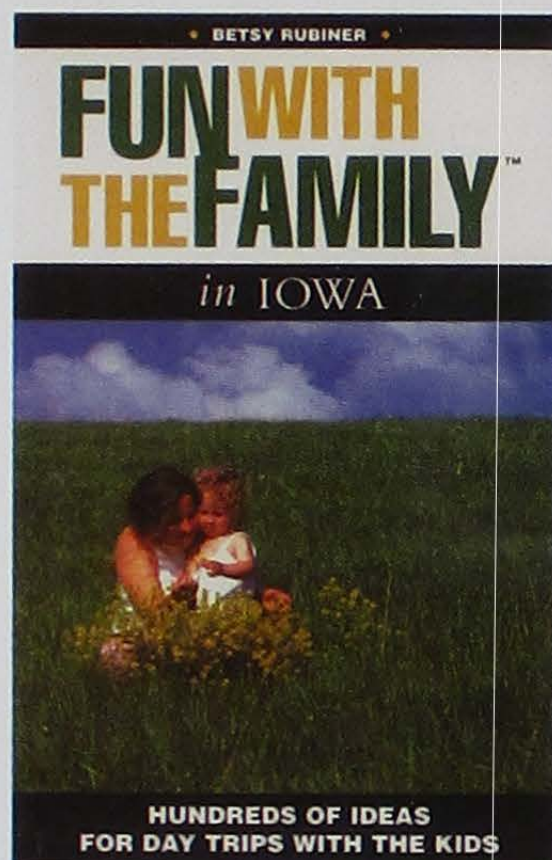
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GUIDES TO

IOWA OUTINGS

By Marisa Myhre

With summer approaching and the threat of blizzards months away, the state is now an open door for anyone willing to risk gas prices. But a summer vacation doesn't require stretching the wallet too far; there are plenty of places to visit right outside the front door. I found two books that are perfect for short weekend trips or rambling drives if you have a little more time.



"Fun with the Family in Iowa"

by Betsy Rubiner

The author is a Michigan native who says she was struck by the beauty of Iowa after seeing "Field of Dreams" and jumped at the opportunity to move to Des Moines when she and her husband were offered jobs at the Des Moines Register in 1990. She has lived in Iowa since then, often taking family trips around the state.

The book was published in 2003, and some of the information may be slightly out of date. She has several pieces on upcoming attractions that are probably up and running by now. Fortunately, a multitude of phone numbers and Web sites for every community and individual attraction are provided, so with a little research it is easy to be certain that the trip will fall perfectly into place. Make use of these numbers; my personal experience has been that chambers of commerce and similar organizations always are eager to offer information and advice.

The book divides Iowa into areas to explore and contains a fairly simple map of cities, highways and rivers. The pricing system seemed a little clumsy to me. Each listing is followed by dollar signs, and the more dollar signs, the more expensive the activity or food. I often found I would have preferred straight

numbers. Any free activity had a larger label in a different font that certainly caught the eye, but I found them to be slightly deceptive as sometimes only children's activities were free, while adults were still charged a fee.

Despite this, the book has a very personal feel. It includes "Picnic Possibilities" as a handy money saver, "Culture for Kids" stops, "Betsy's Top 10 Picks" in each area, "Amazing Iowa Fact" sections to provide some fairly simple information and "Rubiner Family Adventures" telling some of their personal stories.

The back contains appendixes organizing Iowa events alphabetically by date, city and attraction, and activities by categories such as museums and fun parks.

For anyone looking for close, family-friendly adventures, this is an excellent book to help find the jewels right here in Iowa.

"Oddball Iowa"

by Jerome Pohlen

This 2005 book is part of a series, highlighting some of the more unusual areas to visit in a number of states. This author has grandparents in Iowa and so is familiar with the state.

History pervades this book with stories even I, an Iowa native with an interest in these stories, had never stumbled across.

This book contains more mundane sights such as the giant strawberry in Strawberry Point, the "Field of Dreams" field (with the very interesting continuing

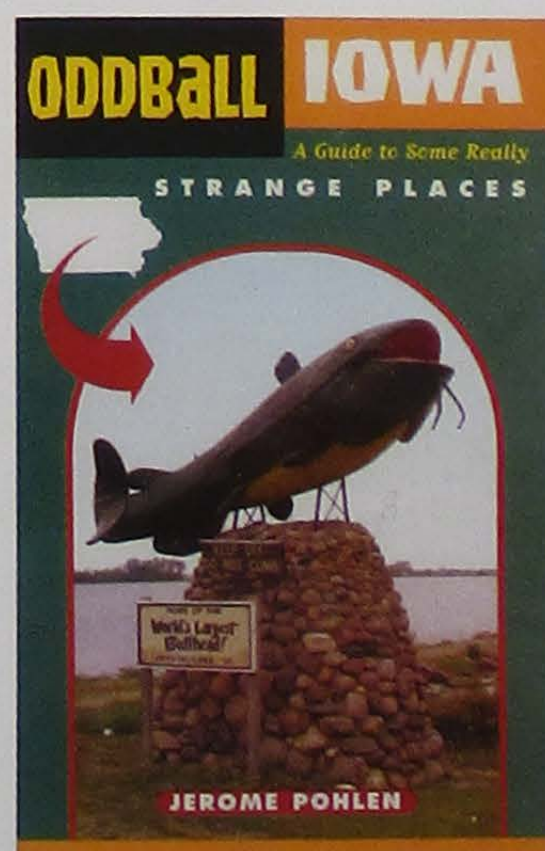
feud between the land's owners), and the American Gothic house, and also areas like a mule cemetery, Captain Kirk's future birthplace, and the Brady Street Banshee.

Mixed in is a lot of history, fun facts on small towns, odd laws, the site of the Howard Dean scream, and a bit of an obsession with UFOs.

This book also offers phone numbers and Web sites to check out if planning on traveling. One thing I really liked was the quality of the directions to the specific places, often navigating in terms of blocks and landmarks.

This book also contains a large two-page map with labeled highways, unlabeled rivers, and

cities with the sites to visit labeled, although not all of the sites are on this map. The book



is also very good at telling people what they may do and how far they can go. Famous houses or sites on farms include the owner's preferences in letting people visit. This book also contains several appendixes, including recommended sources to get more history, a list of cities, and a separate list of site names.

If you're looking for an odd adventure, tuck this book in your backpack.



Marisa Myhre is book manager at Hastings in Ames. She can be reached at 233-3610 or marisamyhre@hotmail.com.

hue & cry

Definition: Any loud clamor or protest intended to incite others to action.

GOING OUTSIDE TO PLAY

By Heidi Marttila-Losure



Sofia Losure is more interested in the camera than the Dutchman's breeches that her father, Dave, is showing her.

On the day before we were to head to Garst Farm Resorts for a weekend of outdoor fun, I heard the radio anchor say the National Weather Service was so sure about its new forecast, the percentages had been left off: No doubt about it, it was going to rain.

Well, we were going to go anyway, as that was the weekend we could get away, but I didn't have a clue what we were going to do there. My husband and I were bringing along our 4-month-old, Sofia. Hiking with a baby is challenging enough; hiking with a baby in the rain just didn't seem like a good idea.

We drove to Garst Farm Resorts in the rain, unloaded the car in the rain and slept in the very cute Hollyhock Cottage as the rain drummed on the roof. We awoke Saturday morning to showers that had slowed but not stopped and

darted over to the main building, the original farm house, under an umbrella for breakfast.

We were still pondering how we should spend our day when Liz Garst sat down with us as we piled our plates with pancakes, sausage and homemade applesauce. She seemed not at all discouraged by the rain.

"I don't know if you realized it, but you have come at the perfect time to hunt morel mushrooms," she said.

For that, the rain not only doesn't matter but helps the hunt, as morels like to pop up after a good soaker. Liz later showed us a large bowl full of the delicious spongy fungi, the yield from mushroom hunting the day before.

Well, that changed my outlook considerably. A mushroom hunt appealed to the Finn in me; many Finnish people, including my grandmother, love to spend their time searching the woods for edible delicacies, including many types of berries and mushrooms. Stalking morels would be a fine way to spend the afternoon.

But there was still the practical matter of heading out with the baby. We had brought rain gear for ourselves, but not for Sofia. We went to Coon Rapids to see if we could find something to keep the rain off her, and we found a little slicker at a thrift store (it was a little too big for her, but at 75 cents, it would suit). We left the store, pleased to be outfitted for our walk in the weather — and the rain had stopped. Isn't that the way it works?

So we left the slickers and ponchos in the car and climbed a fence to get into the wooded area where Liz said we'd find morels. Sofia rode in a carrier that my husband wore; she did some looking around and a lot of listening as my husband and I took in the scenery and the bird-

songs and the wildflowers, all the while searching the ground for morels.

And searching. And searching. After an hour and a half or so, Sofia was getting hungry, so we returned to the car to regroup. I have to admit I was getting a bit discouraged; it was a discredit to my Finnish heritage that we hadn't found a single morel, I thought. But we Finns are also known for our doggedness in the face of adversity (there's even a special word for it: "sisu"), so we headed out again.

Not too much later, we heard some voices from across the valley we were walking. One voice belonged to a boy, maybe 8 years old. "I found another one!" we heard him say.

All right, that's it! I thought. There are morels here, and we are going to find them.

And sure enough, not two minutes later, we stumbled on a large patch of them. Dave pointed them out to Sofia, who showed not much interest (though she probably would have enjoyed chewing on them), as I filled our bag with enough morels for two dinners. I don't know that she'll remember her first morel hunting trip, but she at least slept well that night after all the fresh air.



I was thrilled that we were able to make an outdoor excursion with Sofia work, even at her young age, especially as I've been reading about how important it is to get children connected with nature. Children who aren't connected with the natural world are more likely to have a plethora of problems, Richard Louv writes in "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder." Increases in obesity, attention-deficit disorder and depression are among trends than

can be linked to our plugged-in children's culture.

Aldo Leopold was concerned about this trend already in the 1930s, when he wrote the essay "Illinois Bus Ride." He reflects on the upland plover he sees from a bus window: "Time was when his forebears followed the buffalo as they trudged shoulder-deep through an illimitable garden of forgotten blooms," Leopold writes. "A boy spies the bird and remarks to his father: there goes a snipe."

Nowadays, kids wouldn't have any idea what a snipe looks like, either, local prairie advocate Cindy Hildebrand pointed out to me when I asked her about Aldo Leopold last month. "A lot of kids know more about the rainforest than they do about their own landscape," she said.

Spending time in nature can give children powerful tools: It builds self-confidence and self-reliance, it can serve as a tranquilizer in times of stress and it can be a source of spiritual fulfillment. Studies have shown environmental education can also improve problem-solving skills and creativity — even standardized test scores go up, Louv writes.

We like to marvel over how technology savvy children are today, and I think computer skills are a fine thing for a young person to have. But without a balance of experience in nature, something vital will be missing for our children. Like the skills and self-confidence that little boy had when he spied another morel.

If we want our children to succeed, the best thing we can do for them might just be to tell them to go outside and play.



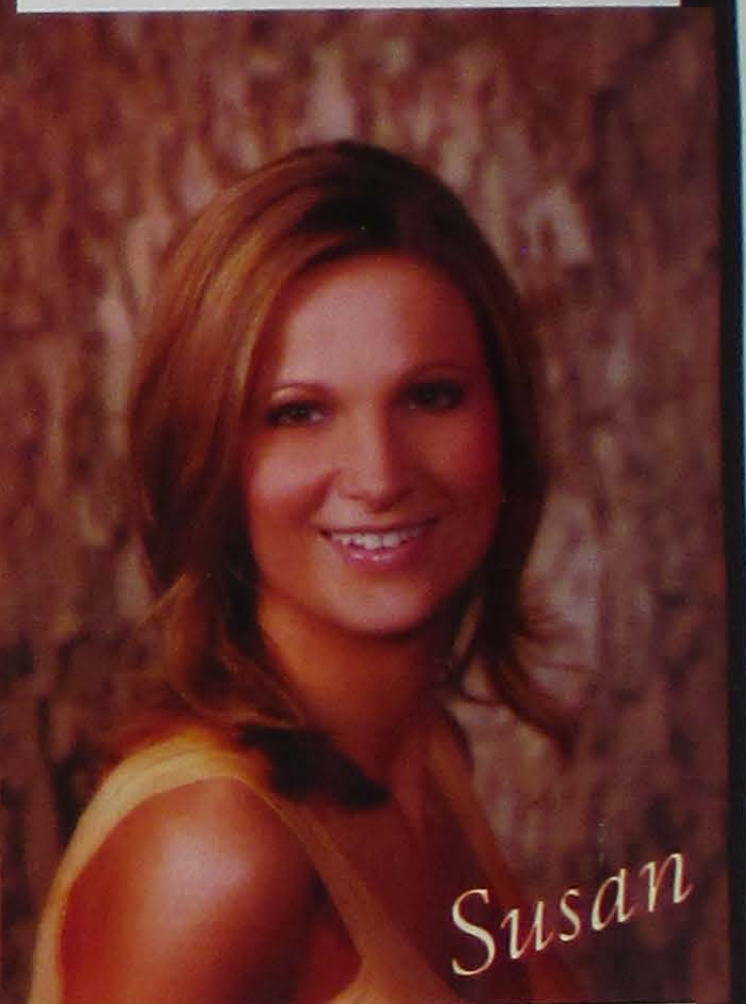
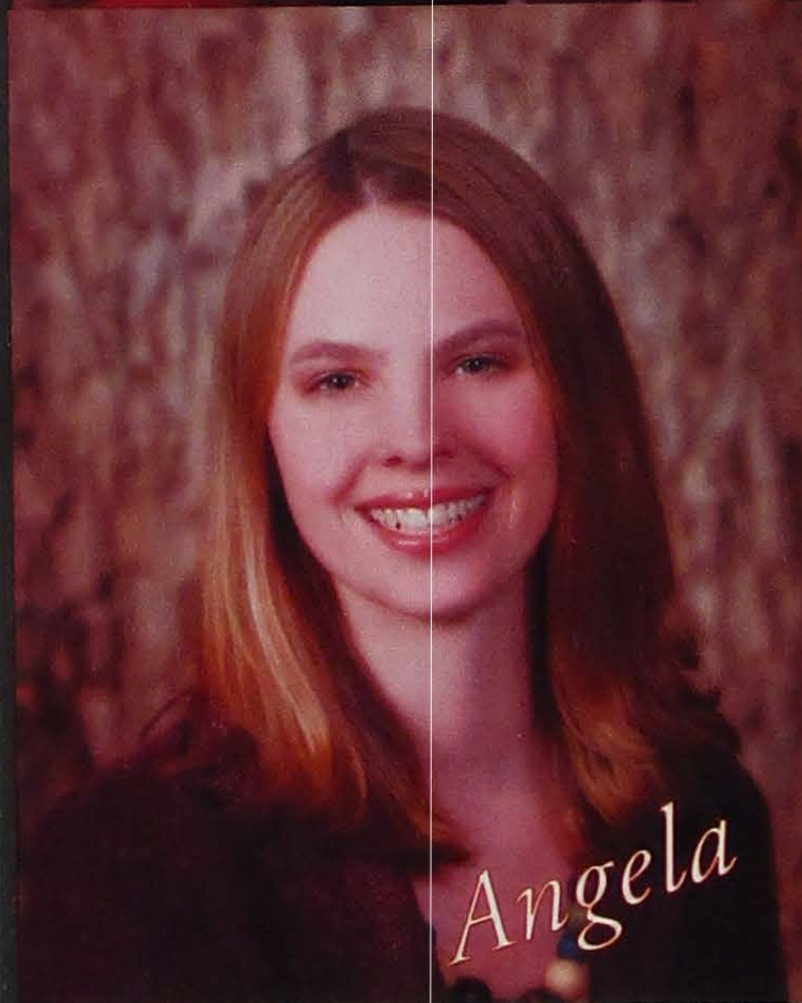
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